



Colony Management Guidelines

Ongoing colony management, combined with Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR), will promote harmony between colony caretakers, neighbors, and property owners and allow for the colony to diminish naturally over time. It is crucial that the following guidelines be followed to ensure that the colony is being properly managed. Failure to follow these guidelines puts the cats at risk by increasing the chance the colony will become a nuisance, forcing Animal Control authorities to impound the cats to mitigate the nuisance.

Caretaker defined: A *caretaker* is a person who provides food, water and shelter for a colony of unowned, free-roaming cats.

Colony defined: A *colony* is any number of unowned, free-roaming cats that frequent an area seeking food or shelter.

How to Care For Your Colony

1. All the cats in the colony, even those that visit sporadically, will be sterilized, eartipped for identification, vaccinated for rabies, and returned to their familiar habitat. Be sure that any new cats observed in your colony are promptly sterilized.
2. Provide adequate food and water for the cats on a daily basis, year round, using techniques to minimize nuisance.
3. Provide adequate shelter for cats in the colony using techniques to minimize nuisance.
4. Ensure that any cats that are injured or ill receive prompt treatment. Contact IndyFeral if you need assistance with an ill or injured cat, but do not wait for IndyFeral if there is a medical emergency. It is not humane to allow any animal to suffer a slow, painful death.
5. Maintain your records (notes, surgery, treatment and vaccination) for all colony cats.
6. Make efforts to place tame colony cats with adoption groups.
7. If you are moving or can no longer adequately care for your colony, contact IndyFeral as soon as possible so that alternate caretaker(s) can be identified.
8. Use humane techniques to discourage or exclude cats from areas where they are not welcome.

For questions with any of these, contact your Cat Captain or IndyFeral directly:

IndyFeral ■ 317-596-2300 ■ www.indyferal.org

Managing a Safe and Healthy Colony

1. On-going Monitoring/TNR

All the cats in the colony, even those that visit sporadically, will be sterilized, eartipped for identification, vaccinated, and returned to their familiar habitat. Make certain any new cats observed in your colony are promptly sterilized.

Why?

When cats are not sterilized they will display offensive mating behaviors which can quickly become a nuisance to the neighbor. They include: spraying, yowling, fighting, constant litters of kittens and roaming the neighborhood.

What to do:

- Contact your Cat Captain or IndyFeral at 317-596-2300 to make an appointment for TNR as soon as any new, unowned cat arrives.
- Educate your neighbors about TNR. Provide them with an IndyFeral brochure. Let them know you are doing something proactive to address the free-roaming cats in the area by implementing a TNR program.
- Make certain any new cats that join the colony are sterilized immediately.
- Make sure they recognize and understand that an ear-tip represents a fully vetted and sterilized colony cat.

Resources:

The Feral Friends program offers financial assistance for spaying and neutering. Assistance is available at no charge for low-income colony caretakers or for those who qualify.

Contact your Cat Captain or IndyFeral at 317-596-2300 for details.

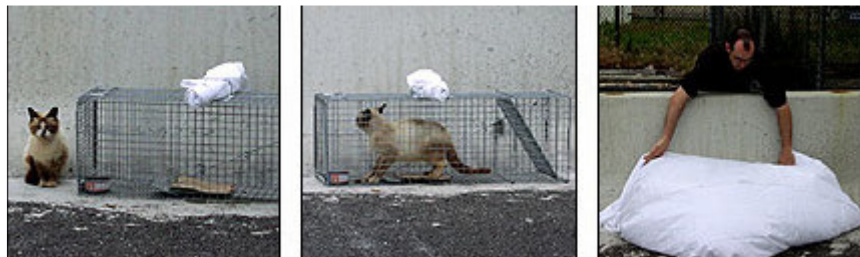


PHOTO BY NEIGHBORHOOD CATS

Cats should ALWAYS be covered during the trapping and transport process in an effort to reduce the stress of the cat

Managing a Safe and Healthy Colony

2. Food and Water

Cats must be provided with adequate food and water on a daily basis year round.

Why?

When cats do not have adequate food and water, they will seek it in areas where they are not welcome in an effort to avoid starving. For example, in your neighbor's trash or a dumpster.

What to do:

- Cats should be fed in a designated, inconspicuous area on your property, away from people or high traffic areas where they may create a nuisance, or be injured.
- Feeding areas should be kept neat and clean. Empty food cans and plates should be picked up promptly. Food that has gotten wet or spoiled (for instance, canned food that has been sitting out all day), should also be discarded. Wet or spoiled food can cause illness.
- Create a small, partially enclosed feeding site to make food/water bowls and the cats less visible, and prevent food from getting wet and spoiled during rain or snow.
- To avoid attracting wildlife, feed cats in the morning or daylight hours only. Remove leftover food.
- If the area where the cats are fed is objectionable for one of your neighbors/property owners, gradually move the station to a less objectionable area a few yards away. This can be done in increments and completely in 1-2 weeks. The cats will follow the food.
- If you are leaving for a time, or cannot feed the cats, arrange to have someone else provide them with food and water on approximately the same schedule.

Resources

IndyFeral maintains a food bank. Colony food assistance is available at no charge for low-income colony caretakers, or those who qualify.

Feeding stations and guidance in placement are available. Contact your Cat Captain or IndyFeral at 317-596-2300.

If you are going on vacation and need assistance feeding your cats during your absence or can't find someone to feed the cats, request assistance on our electronic distribution list at feral@indyferal.org, contact your Cat Captain, or call 317-596-2300.



Rubbermaid storage bin converted into covered feeding station

PHOTO BY NEIGHBORHOOD CATS



PHOTO BY INDYFERAL

Managing a Safe and Healthy Colony

3. Shelter

Cats must be provided with adequate shelter on your property.

Why?

When cats do not have a warm and dry shelter, they may seek it in areas where they are not welcome; for example under your neighbor's deck, shed, or in a car motor.

What to do:

- Cat shelters should be placed in an inconspicuous area on your property, away from people or high traffic areas.
- Shelters and feeding stations should be placed so that cats do not need to cross roads or neighbors' property to move back and forth from shelter to food/water.
- Shelters should be painted in neutral colors, or in some way to blend into the surroundings.
- Straw is the preferred bedding since it does not hold moisture. Do not use blankets, towels or other cloth bedding.
- Provide enough shelters to house all the cats in the colony.

Resources

IndyFeral operates a shelter program. Shelters are available at no charge to low-income caretakers who qualify.

Designs for temporary shelters are available on the IndyFeral web site: <http://indyferal.org/shelter>, or contact your Cat Captain.

Contact your Cat Captain or call 317-596-2300 if additional guidance on shelter placement is necessary.

If you are interested in ordering a shelter, contact your Cat Captain, order by phone at 317-596-2300 or online at <http://indyferal.org/shelter>.



PHOTO BY INDYFERAL

OUTDOOR CAT SHELTER AND FEEDING STATION IDEAS

- In cold weather, shelter is actually more important for stray and feral cats than food.
- Freezing winds, snow and rain can cause frostbite of the ears and paws if colony cats cannot find a dry, wind-proof shelter.
- Even though feral cats build thicker coats for winter, they can quickly succumb to hypothermia, particularly in rain and snow when their fur gets wet and doesn't insulate as well.

Plastic Tote Shelter – A shelter anybody can make; suitable for one to two cats.



Start with a 30 gallon tote for one to two cats



Cut 5 1/2" diameter hole in tote



Insert Styrofoam cooler and cut hole in Styrofoam to match tote

After the cats have begun using the tote shelter, you might want to add a door flap made of heavy plastic or heavy vinyl for further wind/weather protection.

If you need to house more cats, just purchase a larger plastic tote.



Add straw



Add Styrofoam lid



Add tote lid—finished!

Feeding Station—Protect food from getting wet and spoiled during rain and snow.

Create a small, partially enclosed feeding site to make food and water bowls and the cats themselves less visible.



Rubbermaid storage bin converted into covered feeding station

PHOTO BY NEIGHBORHOOD CATS

ADDITIONAL SHELTER IDEAS

Cardboard Box Shelter

For a temporary fix, even a cardboard box is better than nothing - tape the top closed and cut out a hole in one side for a door. Tape or secure a piece of plastic or a large trash bag around the box to make it waterproof. Put newspaper on the bottom and, if possible, place the box under something to protect it further from rain—a piece of wood leaned against a fence, under a tree, etc. If possible, raise the box off the ground where it might get wet.

Styrofoam Cooler Shelter – For one to two cats

An adequate shelter for one to two cats can be made from a simple Styrofoam cooler available at any hardware store. Styrofoam coolers can also be obtained from grocery stores, restaurants, or hospitals and, depending on their size, can house additional cats. The removable lid will allow for easy cleaning.



Insulation

The cats' shelter will be warmer and cozier if you put loose insulating material inside. The material must be dry and loose, so that the cats can burrow into and underneath it. Straw is the preferred bedding because it does not hold moisture. Do not use blankets, towels or folded newspaper. Because the cats can only lie on top of these materials, they actually draw out body heat and defeat the purpose.

In extreme cold, consider a “Snuggle Safe” micro disc for cats. It is a plastic disk about the size of a Frisbee that can be heated in your microwave for 5 to 7 minutes and stays hot for 12 hours. Wrapped in a cloth the cats can't open, the disk is great for providing warmth inside their shelters. Snuggle Safe is available through Petsmart (Item No. 451284, \$19.99). Order online at www.petsmart.com or check your local Petsmart store to see if they have them in stock.



Feral Villa – Cat Shelter
Available only online
at www.feralvilla.com

Placement of Shelters

Cat shelters should be placed in an inconspicuous area on your property, away from people or high traffic. Shelters and feeding stations should be placed so that cats do not cross roads or neighbor's property to move back and forth from shelter to food/water. Provide enough shelters to house all the cats in the colony.

For more shelter ideas, visit our website www.indyferal.org
(317) 596-2300 contact@indyferal.org

Managing a Safe and Healthy Colony

4. Medical Care

Make certain that any cats that are injured or ill receive prompt treatment.

Why?

For humane reasons, all animals must receive treatment as quickly as possible when they are ill or injured. Beyond humane reasons, ill and injured cats may be very disturbing to other compassionate citizens who may call Animal Care and Control, believing that the animal should be euthanized, rather than living with illness or injury. This can also reinforce the stereotype that cats living outdoors are sickly and diseased and should be destroyed.

- Indicators that the cat may be ill/injured include:
 - Weight loss
 - Not eating or drinking
 - Lethargy
 - Discharge from nose and eyes
 - Hair loss
 - Not putting weight on a leg
 - Visible wound
- Contact IndyFeral if you need assistance with an ill or injured cat, but do not wait for IndyFeral if there is a medical emergency. It is not humane to allow any animal to suffer.
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Resources

All IndyFeral managed colony cats have medical care available to them for their entire life. If you have an injured/ill colony cat, contact your Cat Captain or IndyFeral at email contact@indyferal.org or call 317-596-2300.

In addition, if the cat can be handled:

Hawthorn Community Center
Low Cost Medical Clinic (Dr. Peter Johnson)
2440 West Ohio
Indianapolis, IN 46222
Every Wednesday 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
For more information, contact 317-637-4312

Managing a Safe and Healthy Colony

5. Maintain Medical Records

Maintain your records (notes, surgery, treatment and vaccination) for all colony cats.

All cats spayed/neutered and vaccinated through IndyFeral receive the following “standard” package:

- Spay or neuter surgery
- 3-year rabies vaccination
- FVRCP (“distemper” and upper respiratory virus) vaccination
- Long-acting antibiotic
- Pain medications
- Topical application of Revolution which treats fleas, ticks and several types of worms for up to 30 days
- Surgical cropping of the left ear



PHOTO BY ALLEY CAT ALLIES

The eartip serves as a permanent ID.

Why?

Marion County residents are required to maintain rabies records at all times for inspection by Animal Care and Control upon request. Further, if urgent medical attention is needed, having such information readily available can save valuable time.

- Maintaining good vet records allows you to show actual evidence that the feral cats are healthy and fully vaccinated.
- Records can be used as a tool to educate neighbors that are fearful that the ferals will pass a disease to them or their pet cats.

Treatment records are provided to all Caretakers after an IndyFeral Spay Day or Wellness Clinic.

If you have lost your records, contact IndyFeral at contact@indyferal.org or call 317-596-2300

Managing a Safe and Healthy Colony

6. Adoption of Tame Cats

Make efforts to place tame colony cats with adoption groups.

Often times you will find friendly pet cats that have been abandoned or lost by their owner. These cats have joined a colony in an effort to survive.

Why?

Fewer cats in the colony will reduce the incidence of nuisance complaints. Cats which have lived indoors most of their lives often have a harder time successfully adapting to living outdoors. They are more likely to fall victim to violence because they do not fear humans.

- We encourage all caretakers to make efforts to use the resources of adoption organizations in an attempt to place tame cats and kittens.
- As resources and opportunities arise, IndyFeral will attempt to place tame, adoptable cats that we encounter during our spay/neuter clinics. If you have a cat which you believe may be adoptable, please inform your Cat Captain or IndyFeral volunteer which cat it is, so that we may evaluate it if adoption possibilities are available at the time. IndyFeral will only place cats with organizations that will not euthanize the cats to make space for more.

Facts to consider when deciding to find a home for a stray cat:

Unowned, free-roaming cats come from diverse backgrounds. As such, it is nearly impossible to predict if a stray or feral can be successfully socialized to the degree that would make it suitable for adoption. Not only is it labor intensive; the outcome is uncertain. Even a socialized cat may have been abandoned because it exhibited problems. One that is poorly socialized may put the adoptive owner in a difficult position and will often lead to the cat being abandoned again or relinquished to a shelter. For this reason, if a cat is doing well in its current colony, we believe it is best to leave the cat there. IndyFeral hopes one day that there will be homes for all the cats ...but the current reality is that healthy, adoptable cats are euthanized daily in our city due to lack of homes.

Feral Cats: Truly feral cats are not candidates for adoption. They do not seek human companionship or interaction. It takes months to socialize a feral cat and they may bond to the person socializing, but may regress to a feral state when introduced to new people. TNR is the most humane option for feral cats.

Semi-Feral: Semi-feral cats may be more receptive to socialization. However, if the cat has been on the street for many years it may be as difficult to socialize as a total feral. These cats are also difficult to place. Quite often, bringing new people into its environment will be overwhelming and cause the cat to regress. If this happens the cat is not a good candidate for adoption.

Domestic: These cats are the easiest to place in a home. They seek human interaction and touch. They do not regress when introduced to different people or environments.

Managing a Safe and Healthy Colony

**Please note: You have not failed if the cat you are working with cannot be socialized for adoption. What you may think is best for a feral or semi-feral cat may not always be in the best interest of the cat or what the cat is willing to or capable of doing. We need to respect the unique ways and manners of the cat.

Resources

Adoption Assistance Groups

- **ARPO** (Alliance for Responsible Pet Ownership) 317-774-8292 www.adoptarpo.org
- **Cats Haven** 317-925-7001 www.catshaven.org
- **Humane Society of Hamilton County** Phone 317.773.4974 www.hamiltonhumane.com
- **Humane Society of Indianapolis** 317-872-5650 www.indyhumane.org
- **Indianapolis Animal Care and Control** 317-327-1397 www.indygov.org/accd
- **Indiana PAW** 317-345-6773 www.indiana-paw.com – comprehensive list of breed rescues
- **Internet Cat Club** Cat Breed Rescue Contacts www.netcat.org/rescue
- **Jerico Society** 317-745-5174 www.petfinder.org/shelters/IN70.html
- **Southside Animal Shelter** 317-882-4080 www.ssasi.org
- **Tails A' Waggin' Rescue, Inc.** 317-769-2543 www.tailsawaggin.org
- **WAGS Stray Animal Foundation** 317-335-7354 or call Fishers Petco at 317-598-0899 www.wagsstrays.org

If you choose to place a cat up for adoption on your own, please follow these guidelines:

- **Advertise through friends, neighbors, and local veterinarians first; then try the newspaper, if all else fails.** Your chances of finding a good home are increased when you check references with someone you know.
- **Visit the prospective new home in order to get a feel for the environment in which the cat will be living.**
- **Always be mindful of your own safety when you go to interview potential adopters or if you allow a prospective adopter to enter your home.**
- **Don't be fooled.** If anyone refuses to allow you to visit their home, do not place the cat with them. Individuals known as "bunchers" routinely answer "free-to-good-home" ads, posing as people who want family pets when, in actuality, they sell pets to animal dealers. Dogfighters have also been known to obtain domestic animals for baiting through "free to good home" ads. These people are "professionals" who may even bring children or their mothers with them when picking up pets.
- **Ask for a valid form of identification (preferably a driver's license).** Record the number for your records and require the new owner to sign a contract stating the requirements of adoption upon which both parties agree. As part of the contract, require the new owner to contact you if he or she decides at some point that they must give up the pet.
- **Have your pet neutered or spayed before he or she goes to the new home.** This will make the animal more adoptable and help stop irresponsible breeding.

Stray Cat Adoption Agreement

I, _____, the Adoptee agree to adopt the cat described below from

_____, the Adopter, and acknowledge by my initials each of the following:

1. I agree to see that the cat will have annual veterinary checkups and be kept current on all vaccinations.
2. Everyone in my home knows about and agrees to accept this cat into the household.
3. I agree that if at any point in time, I cannot keep this cat I will return him/her to Adopter and not pass him on to any third party. Adopter agrees to accept this animal back at any time, no questions asked.
4. I represent that I, anyone living with me, or any other person who will have contact with the cat has not been charged with cruelty to animals.
5. I acknowledge that if I live in a rented premise, that I have the permission of all necessary persons, including any landlord or resident manager, to have the cat.
6. I agree to keep the cat as a household pet where it will be part of the family. It will not be kept in a barn, shed, garage, basement or any space that is not occupied by my family.
7. I agree that the cat will not be allowed outside unless he/she is supervised, leashed on a cat-safe-harness, or in an enclosed cat run or cat-proofed fenced yard. I acknowledge hazards in the form of other animals, disease, insect pests, poisons, cars, cruel or thoughtless people, or becoming lost or stolen are more likely to confront the cat outdoors.
8. I agree to obtain appropriate identification for my cat in the form of a break-away collar or microchip. Too many healthy cats are destroyed because the owner could be not located.
9. The \$_____ adoption fee is non-refundable and does not include any future medical care or imply any warranty of health or temperament.

Waiver and Release

This cat is a stray/unowned animal, and comes from an unknown origin with unknown history. As of today, this cat is believed to be healthy unless otherwise stated below, but as with any stray animal, there is no express or implied guarantee that there are no other conditions in addition to those noted below, and no express or implied guarantee of his/her future health, temperament, or accuracy of health status noted below.

I, the Adoptee, release Adopter, IndyFeral Inc. and its volunteers, participating veterinarians and facilities' owners and lessees from any liability, including that incurred during past or future handling, medial treatment, transport or care of this cat.

SIGNED this _____ day of _____, 200____

Adoptee Signature _____ Adopter Signature _____

Adoptee Printed _____ Adopter Printed _____

Address _____ Address _____

City _____ State ___ Zip _____ City _____ State ___ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Telephone _____

Adoption Fee

Amount of Adoption Fee Received _____ Received by: _____

Cat Information

Cat Description: _____

Coat length: Short (DSH) Medium (DMH) Long (DLH)

Estimated Age: ___ weeks months years Weight: _____ lbs. _____ ozs.

Gender: Male Female spayed/neutered

Information as of: ___/___/20___

Noted medical conditions: _____

Managing a Safe and Healthy Colony

7. Inability to Continue Providing Care

If you are moving or can no longer adequately care for your colony, contact IndyFeral as soon as possible so that alternate caretaker(s) can be identified.

Why?

It is inhumane to abandon a colony of cats that has grown dependent on you.

Left alone the cats will starve to death or run the risk of becoming a nuisance as their basic survival needs are not being met and, they may be impounded by Animal Care and Control.

IndyFeral will assist in finding a new caretaker by canvassing your neighborhood, working with your neighborhood association or through our feral cat network. Contact your Cat Captain or IndyFeral at contact@indyferal.org or call 317-596-2300.

Managing a Safe and Healthy Colony

8. Exclude Cats from Areas They Are Not Welcome

Use humane techniques to discourage or exclude cats from areas where they are not welcome.

Why?

If you fail to address your neighbors' complaints about excluding cats from specific areas where they are not welcome, you are risking their lives by allowing them to become a nuisance and forcing Animal Care and Control to impound the cats to mitigate the nuisance.

All property owners have the right to not have cats on their property. Often times, they simply don't understand why the cats are present, or object to a particular behavior of the cats. Some times, they fear the cats may carry disease. It is best to try and determine the specific reason for their objection, educate them, and/or try to mitigate the complaint, if possible, using communication and techniques outlined here. If you cannot do this, CONTACT IndyFeral, or have the neighbor contact IndyFeral. Please do not trespass, argue with the neighbor, or inflame the situation.

Most problems fall into 2 categories:

1. Cats are entering an area in which they are not welcome to seek food, water, or shelter.
2. Cats are entering an area in which they are not welcome to eliminate.

Addressing Elimination Issues:

- Provide a litter box area for your colony on your property to prevent the cats from using your neighbor's garden or flower bed. The number one complaint about free-roaming cats is inappropriate elimination.
- A cat's natural instinct is to eliminate in soft, loose, soil-like mulch, sand or peat moss.
- Build a simple wood frame and fill it with sand, dirt, etc. in a quiet area away from the shelter and feeding areas.
- Provide the cats with covered outdoor litter boxes.

TIP: Removing urine stains and odors. Clean areas where urine has been sprayed with white vinegar or Nature's Miracle (available in most pet stores). It will eliminate most urine stains and odors.

Excluding Cats from Specific Areas:

- Utilize the suggestions provided on the "Nuisance Prevention Tips Sheet for Feral Cats" to address specific nuisance complaints your neighbor may have.
- Purchase a Cat Stop and offer it to your neighbor in an effort to exclude a cat from an area where it is not welcome.
- Suggest that the area be secured, enclosed or sealed, and offer to help, if practical. Cats often get under decks, crawlspaces, garages, sheds, etc. to seek shelter. These are also areas that can usually be readily sealed.
- ***If cats are seeking shelter in an area in which they are not welcome, there is a problem with the number, type, or placement of shelters you have provided!!***

Resources

IndyFeral serves as a mediator, educator, and resource to help caretakers manage their colonies more effectively and in a way that promotes harmony between feral cat caretakers, neighbors, and property owners.

If you need assistance contact your Cat Captain or IndyFeral at contact@indyferal.org or call at 317-596-2300.

Managing a Safe and Healthy Colony

Legal Responsibilities for Caretakers of Managed Colonies

Indianapolis Ordinance Sec. 531-210. Colony caretaker responsibilities.

(a) Colony caretakers shall abide by standard guidelines devised by the animal care and control division or its designee regarding the provision of food, water, shelter and veterinary care for cats within the managed colony.

(b) Colony caretakers shall have a licensed veterinarian evaluate the health of all trapped free-roaming cats. Seriously ill or injured cats with no reasonable prognosis for humane rehabilitation for survival outdoors will be humanely euthanized.

(c) A person who violates any provision of this section shall be punishable as provided in section 103-3 of this Code; provided, however, a fine imposed for the first such violation shall not be less than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00); subsequent or continued violations caretaker's removal from management of the managed colony, or the designee's removal from the program.

Help keep feral and stray cats safe in our community Report Cruelty/Abuse, Abandonment, Poisoning

CRUELTY/ABUSE

Section 531-401, entitled, "General requirements for animal care and treatment," states that animals must be, "protected against abuse, cruelty, neglect, torment, overload, overwork, or any other mistreatment;"

ABANDONMENT

Section 531-402, entitled, "Abandonment of animal," states, "It shall be unlawful for a person to abandon any animal on public or private property in the city,"

POISONING

Section 531-403, entitled, "Attempts to poison animal" states, "It shall be unlawful for a person to throw or deposit poisoned meat or any poison or harmful substance in any street, alley, marketplace or public place, or on any private premises"

To STOP THIS ILLEGAL ACT, do the following now:

1. Immediately contact Indianapolis Animal Care and Control Division via the Mayor's Action Center at 317-327-4622. Give them the details of the situation and address where the crime is occurring and the name(s) of anyone committing the crime, if known.
2. Contact IndyFeral Inc. at 317-596-2300. Leave your name & phone number and the details of the situation, including the address where the crime is occurring, and the name(s) of anyone committing the crime, if known.

